



Lexington County Sheriff's Department Policy and Procedures



3.40 Evidence and Property Storage Procedures (83.2.4d)

All evidence and/or property shall be submitted or returned to the evidence room with the proper paperwork prior to the end of the deputy's tour of duty. No evidence shall be stored in personal lockers, vehicles, offices, cubicles, or any other location after the deputy ends his/her tour of duty. The only exception to this policy is noted below. The Incident Report associated with the submitted property shall detail the circumstances by which the deputy came into possession of the property. (84.1.1a,b,c)

Any physical evidence collected shall be transported to LCSD Headquarters and turned over to the evidence room. Temporary property storage lockers shall be available when the evidence room is closed. The lockers shall remain unlocked until evidence/property is placed inside. Once the deputy secures the locker, it cannot be reopened except by an Evidence Custodian. For items that require refrigeration, such as rape kits, refrigerators are available in the evidence room lobby for that purpose. The evidence is to be placed inside a refrigerator and the lock secured. (84.1.3, 84.1.1b)

If the Evidence room is closed, items that are not to be used as evidence, such as found property that will not fit in a locker may be left secured in the evidence room lobby for collection by the Custodians on the next business day. However, if any of the following circumstances exist and the property is to be used as evidence, the on-call Evidence Custodian shall be called to Headquarters to secure the property: (84.1.3)

- The evidence is too large to secure in the storage locker;
- All of the lockers are locked;
- Evidence is brought in that requires refrigeration and the refrigerators are already locked;
- A vehicle is brought in that is evidence and needs to be secured with an intact chain of custody;
- Currency valued in excess of \$5,000; or
- Any other situation, at the discretion of a supervisor, sergeant or above.

Exception: Occasions may arise where additional storage space is needed to store items that are of extreme size and/or quantity, such as illegal gaming machines or seized counterfeit items. When these occasions arise, it may be necessary to acquire warehouse type storage facilities. All keys and locks that give access directly to these storage areas will be in full control of the Evidence Custodians. Appropriate paperwork will be submitted to the evidence room and the custodians will view, verify, log and mark the items per normal procedures. It is acceptable to log these types of items in "in bulk," such as "35 boxes of counterfeit T-shirts," or "5 gaming machines," unless it is important to the case that certain items are kept separate. Each group will be assigned a separate bag number by RMS. No evidence or property will be accepted directly into the evidence room from anyone other than employees of LCSD. The only exception to this is evidence surrendered from another law enforcement agency where that evidence is attached to a case involving LCSD and/or its components (i.e., the drug lab). No evidence or property will be accepted by the evidence room directly from the public. In



Lexington County Sheriff's Department Policy and Procedures



such cases, a deputy must complete an incident report or supplement report with a case number documenting why the agency is taking possession of the property.

Evidence/Property Voucher

All deputies transferring evidence and/or property to the evidence room must complete the necessary paperwork. Failure to complete the required documentation may result in the property and/or evidence not being entered into agency records. Missing and/or carelessly written paperwork makes successful prosecution difficult, and sometimes impossible, therefore, the deputy will be notified of mistakes on the documentation and required to make the necessary corrections as soon as possible. Failure to respond to the notification will result in the notification of the deputy's supervisor and if not resolved, to the chain of command.

An Evidence/Property Voucher shall be completed for all evidence or property transferred to the evidence room. A **detailed** description of each item(s) shall be given, including serial numbers if present. Vouchers are created by the RMS program and need to be as complete as possible, to include the case officer's name, seizing officer's name and appropriate dates and times. Note that the section labeled "Verified By" is for money only, but must be utilized regardless of the amount. (84.1.1c)

Security

Extra security measures shall be taken by Evidence personnel for handling and storage of exceptionally valuable or sensitive items of property. Money, negotiable bonds, valuable jewelry, and any other small object needing extra security shall be kept in a safe located in the evidence room. Only Evidence Custodians shall have access to the safe. (84.1.1e)

Seized Monies

Deputies seizing funds or recovering abandoned monies shall complete an Incident Report. The monies shall be transferred, with a detailed Evidence Voucher that indicates denominations; i.e. 5 \$10 bills, 70 \$20 bills, followed by a total, in the "note" field on the property module voucher. If the evidence room is closed, the monies shall be put in a temporary evidence storage locker. If the monies seized are over \$5,000 and the evidence room is closed, the on-call custodian shall be notified to respond and take custody of the money. All money will be counted and verified by another employee, before sealing the bag, other than the one entering it into evidence. The second employee's name will be entered on the voucher in the "Verified By" Field. If the money count is inaccurate it will not be accepted and the submitting deputy will be notified immediately. (84.1.1e)

Photographs/Video Tapes

Digital photos shall be uploaded to the photo computer kiosk located in the evidence room lobby. Each deputy shall have their own password to the system. Passwords are not to be shared. Digital photos should be uploaded before the end of the deputy's end of shift. In this instance, it will not be necessary to complete an evidence voucher. The photos are stored on a secure server established for this purpose and are sorted and accessible by case number.



Lexington County Sheriff's Department Policy and Procedures



Polaroid or any other brand of instant photography photos, VHS video tapes and CD's (or electronic materials) will be treated as evidence and submitted to the evidence room. 35mm film will be submitted to CSI for processing. Officers may retain photographs or video taken for the purpose of documenting non-criminal violations such as code violations.

Firearms

Any firearm or other weapon capable of discharging an object **shall be unloaded** and the breach left or blocked open, or the cylinder left open, whichever applies. The ammunition or projectiles must be listed separately from the weapon on the Property Voucher. If for any reason the weapon cannot be unloaded, such as protection for latent printing, the weapon **MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED** that it is still loaded. Hand guns along with empty magazine should be packaged together in clear plastic bags for verification by custodians that the gun is indeed unloaded and that the serial number is correct.

Sharps

Any item that is designed to be sharp or is known to be sharp, such as knives, swords, needles, razor blades, scissors, ice picks, broken glass or electric control device/Taser barbs **MUST BE PROPERLY SECURED**. Electric control device/Taser barbs should be re-inserted into the slot in the cartridge provided for that purpose. Knives, needles and picks should be put in sharps tubes provided for that purpose. Razor blades or knives that will not fit in the tubes should be taped or strapped to cardboard and clearly marked.

Biohazard

Objects known to be a biohazard must be properly packaged as described in the SLED Evidence Submission Manual, which is available via the email Forms Folder. Great care must be taken that the evidence is properly packaged and marked to protect the transporting deputy and custodians from contamination. These materials pose a threat to the health and safety of all personnel who come into contact with them. Every effort should be made to photograph these items so that the materials can be properly disposed of and the photos used in court in their place. Particular care must be taken for items collected at autopsies. *If at all possible*, these items, such as clothing, should be inspected for trace, photographed to show evidentiary points of interest, trace collected and the items rinsed free of tissue at the autopsy site. If the items are no longer needed, they should be left with the coroner for disposal. The exception to this would be items that are to be *immediately* sent to SLED.

Hazardous Materials

The evidence room will not accept hazardous materials, specifically, caustic or flammable liquids or explosives (other than ammunition). If it is necessary to submit a sample of a hazardous liquid, it must be in small container designed specifically for that purpose and it must be submitted for immediate testing and disposal. These liquids, such as drain cleaner or liquid fire are a hazard to evidence personnel and facilities and



Lexington County Sheriff's Department Policy and Procedures



will not be accepted. Deputies obtaining these substances must contact a hazardous materials specialist for proper disposal. Every effort should be made to take photographs of the containers to be used as evidence and the containers and substances properly disposed. The evidence room will accept the empty containers these liquids were found in, but this too should be kept to a minimum because the containers can also pose a threat.

Perishables

Perishable substances, such as food, will not be held by the evidence room without a legitimate reason for testing.